September Updates 2026

Assessment, Reporting and Parent Consultation Calendar 2026–27

As part of our ongoing review of assessment and reporting, we will be moving from three formal reports per year to two formal reports per year for each year group from September 2026. Although the Department for Education expects schools to provide parents with a formal report once a year, we remain committed to reporting home twice annually, so that families continue to receive regular, useful information about their child's progress.

Reports will continue to include our key learning attributes, focused on effort, homework and behaviour, alongside relevant assessment information at key points in the year. This change is intended to place greater emphasis on the quality, accuracy and usefulness of the information shared with parents, while also ensuring that assessment points are better aligned with the wider school calendar.

Students in Years 8–11 will continue to experience a formal examination or mock examination period each year, helping them to build confidence, revision habits and examination skills. In planning the calendar, we have taken on board parent feedback and have tried to avoid placing major assessment periods immediately after the Christmas holiday where possible. We have also moved the Year 9 examination period earlier in the year so that students and parents receive clearer, more accurate information ahead of the Year 9 options process.

The calendar also includes tutor check-ins, which provide an opportunity to check in on students' overall progress and wellbeing. Where relevant, PPCE or PSCE evenings, PIAG events and options evenings are included so that families can see how written reports, assessment periods and opportunities for discussion fit together across the year.

Planned reporting, assessment and consultation schedule

Year group	Reports sent home	Exam / mock exam period	PPCE / PSCE	Tutor check-in	PIAG / options events
Year 7	20 October 2026 25 May 2027	Baseline assessments from 7 September 2026, including reading baseline and CATs	10 June 2027	8 October 2026	24 September 2026 – Intro to Hardenhuish (in person) 10 June 2027 – Moving into Y8 (remote)
Year 8	23 February 2027 22 June 2027	Year 8 Exam Fortnight begins 18 January 2027	25 February 2027	8 October 2026	11 December 2026 – Y8 Exams (remote) 11 March 2027 – Options Launch
Year 9	5 January 2027 29 June 2027	Year 9 exams begin 30 November 2026 and are marked as ending on 8 December 2026	14 January 2027	8 October 2026	12 May 2027 – Y9 Exams and moving into KS4 (remote) 21 January 2027 – KS4 Options Evening
Year 10	26 January 2027 11 May 2027	Year 10 Exam Fortnight begins 14 April 2027	13 May 2027	8 October 2026	14 October 2026 – WEX / PSHE / Statistics (in person)

					28 January 2027 – Revision / Exams / Mocks (remote)
Year 11	1 December 2026 27 April 2027	Year 11 mocks begin 3 November 2026; pre-exam assessments are listed from 8 March 2027	3 December 2026	8 October 2026	29 September 2026 – Post-16 Options (remote)
Year 12	2 February 2027 7 July 2027	Year 12 assessment weeks begin 4 January 2027; Year 12 mocks begin 15 June 2027	PSCE: 4 February 2027	8 October 2026	30 September 2026 – Intro to Sixth Form (in person) 19 May 2027 – Post-18 (remote)
Year 13	13 October 2026 16 March 2027	Year 13 mocks begin 3 February 2027	PSCE: 18 March 2027	8 October 2026	1 October 2026 – Intro to Y13 (remote)

Benedict's Law

Benedict's Law has been developed to improve allergy safety in schools and will introduce a series of statutory protective measures, designed to support students who actively manage an allergy.

An integral part of the new legislation is the requirement for us to write and record an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for all of our students who actively manage an allergy, including allergies that haven't historically been recorded, such as hay fever.

In September we will therefore be communicating with you to enable us to capture important allergy information, which will allow us to write the Individual Health Care Plans by the end of the autumn term 2026.

Catering Provision

From September the school will be moving to a new catering supplier, Angel Hill Food Co. Staff, students and governors were all engaged in the process of choosing our new supplier. Our wonderful existing catering staff will continue to work at Hardenhuish, with Angel Hill Food Co.

This change has been made following a careful review to ensure we continue to provide high-quality, nutritious, and enjoyable meals for our students. The new supplier will offer a varied menu that meets all relevant nutritional standards and caters to a range of dietary requirements and allergies.

We are working closely with the new catering provider to ensure a smooth transition, with minimal disruption to our students, and will provide further information in September.

Martyn's Law

We would like to inform you that from September there will be some changes to the way visitors access the school site. These changes are being introduced to further enhance site security, safeguarding arrangements, and compliance with Martyn's Law requirements.

Over the summer, we will be installing security barriers at both school entry points from Hardenhuish Lane and Long Ridings. Access through these gates will be controlled via an intercom system connected to Reception, allowing reception staff to manage entry to the site more effectively.

These improvements are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our pupils, staff and visitors. Further information about the new procedures will be shared before the start of the autumn term.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we continue to strengthen security across our school.

Mobile Phone Policy

You may have seen reports about changes to the use of mobile phones in schools. The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act means that schools now have a responsibility to ensure that they are mobile phone-free environments. This means that pupils must not use mobile phones at any point during the school day – including during lessons, movement between lessons, break and lunchtime.

We already have a policy that phones should be switched off and in bags (not pockets) from 8:30-3:00pm, so this is not a significant change to our current policy. The new legislation strengthens the importance of the approach we already take and provides a consistent national expectation for all schools.

Research shows that reducing access to mobile phones during the school day can help to:

- Help pupils remain focused and engaged in their learning
- Create a calmer learning environment by limiting distractions
- Encourage positive social interactions between pupils
- Reduce opportunities for bullying and online conflict
- Promote pupils' wellbeing and support healthy habits around technology use

Our expectations are clear and straightforward. If a mobile phone is in a pocket, seen, heard or used during the school day, it will be confiscated in accordance with our Positive Behaviour Policy, and a sanction will be issued. On the first incident, pupils will be able to collect their phone from Reception at the end of the day and parents will be informed. From the second incident onwards, a parent or carer will need to arrange to collect the phone from Reception. With further incidents more significant sanctions will be put in place which may include longer confiscation, and potentially suspension. Whenever a phone is confiscated, an email and text will be sent home. The same applies to headphones and smartwatches (which may be worn but can only be used for timekeeping).

There are exemptions to this, including pupils with diagnosed medical conditions who rely on their device for medical alerts (for example, diabetes), or young carers who may visit Year Offices to make contact with home when required.

The same expectations apply to staff when children are present, unless they are authorised to use a mobile phone for school-related purposes. Parents and carers are also expected to follow this policy when visiting the school.

We know that it is important to work in a three-way partnership with parents. We would therefore appreciate your continued support by:

- Discussing the school's mobile phone expectations with your child
- Helping them develop the routine of keeping their phone switched off and out of sight throughout the school day
- Considering whether a basic mobile phone, rather than a smartphone, is sufficient if they need one only for communication purposes whilst travelling to and from school, or using parental controls to limit smartphone features during school hours. Alternatively, considering whether a phone is needed in school at all!
- Reinforcing the importance of following staff instructions respectfully if asked to hand over a phone.

We appreciate that there may occasionally be a need to contact your child during the school day. If this is the case then please contact the school office. Please do not attempt to contact your child directly on their mobile phone during the school day. Similarly, if your child needs to contact you, they can do so via their Year Office.

Uniform

There are no significant changes to our school uniform for September. The only change is for pupils joining in Year 7, whose PE socks will change from the green and black hooped design to plain black football socks. Pupils in Years 8-11 may continue to wear the green and black hooped socks, or may choose to wear plain black football socks.

This change helps us to keep the number of required branded uniform items to a minimum, and we are pleased that our uniform costs remain among the lowest in the local area.

We would also like to take this opportunity to give a reminder of some key uniform expectations. The only jewellery permitted is a single stud or sleeper in one or both ears, no other facial or body piercings are allowed. Any changes to hair colour should be a natural shade, and pupils are encouraged to speak to their Learning or Pastoral Manager before styling or colouring their hair to ensure that it is acceptable.